Testimony of
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U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4
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Good morning Mr. Chairman, and esteemed members of the Committee. I am Trey Glenn, Regional Administrator for EPA Region 4, which comprises 8 southeastern states (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee) and six federally recognized tribes (Catawba Indian Nation, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Poarch Band of Creek Indians and the Seminole Tribe of Indians).

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the impacts of Hurricane Irma and EPA's response and recovery efforts, and to continue the productive discussions we had last month with the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on the Environment.

I have been on the job a little over two months and I can honestly say that I am in awe of the caliber of expertise and dedication of the regional staff. These environmental professionals work each day to meet EPA's mission of protecting human health and the environment, and this commitment was demonstrated consistently throughout EPA's response to the devastating hurricanes we experienced this past season.

OVERVIEW OF EPA REGION 4 RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

The 2017 hurricane season was indeed unprecedented in the number and intensity of major storms that impacted the United States and U.S. Territories. The damage from hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria is still being assessed, and the response to these storms will continue for the foreseeable future. EPA Region 4 is fully engaged in a number of response and recovery activities and we are working in close coordination with our federal, state, local and tribal partners, as well as the business and local communities.

Responding to emergencies for the prevention, limitation, mitigation or containment of chemical, oil, radiological, biological, and/or hazardous materials or agents during and in the aftermath of an accident, natural or man-made, is a primary mission essential function of the EPA. The core of the Emergency Response program in Region 4 consists of 28 On-Scene Coordinators (OSCs) with support staff who respond to releases of hazardous substances and discharges of oil throughout the eight states of Region 4. Our preparedness and operational capabilities are extended through contracts we have in place for technical assistance and spill response, as well as mutual aid agreements with EPA Regions 3 and 5. Our emergency response program also has reach back ability to all EPA regions and EPA Special Teams, such as the EPA Environmental Response Team and the U.S. Coast Guard National Strike Force.

Region 4 has 57 additional personnel within a Response Support Corp (RSC) which is a body consisting of non-OSC staff trained to deploy to or support disaster response and includes 35 non-OSC staff with Key Leadership Position training under the Incident Command System. Response Support Corp members volunteer to provide this response support in addition to their normal work responsibilities.

Having a robust Superfund program is critical to being prepared and ready to mobilize for any emergency response. In preparation for Hurricanes Harvey and Irma, we worked in a proactive manner to ensure that we had awareness of potential vulnerabilities and, in particular due to the trajectory of Hurricane Irma, were able to attend to any concerns in Florida prior to the storm's landfall.

In anticipation of Hurricane Harvey, we conducted Incident Management Training for staff the week prior to landfall to ensure that regional Response Support Corps personnel were refreshed in the Incident Command System (ICS). In the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, Region 4 deployed four Response Support Corps members of the National Incident Management Assistance Team (N-IMAT) to support EPA Region 6 in Texas. The N-IMAT is a standing body of EPA personnel available to respond anywhere in the United States or U.S. Territories to assist regions in establishing an ICS structure to manage incidents that exceed regional capabilities and/or are of national significance.

With our assistance to the Hurricane Harvey response ongoing, and in anticipation that Hurricane Irma would impact the coastal states of the southeast region. I personally reached out to the Environmental Directors of Alabama, Georgia, Florida, North Carolina and South Carolina to inform them of Region 4's ability to assist, if needed. We also reached out to our tribal partners that might be impacted by the storm. Other than Florida, no other Region 4 state or tribe requested EPA assistance relative to Hurricane Irma.

In anticipation of a weekend landfall of Hurricane Irma, we increased staffing in our Regional Emergency Operations Center to provide continuity of operations and coordination across the response activities. At the request of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), we also deployed our Region 4 OSC stationed in Florida to the State

Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) in Tallahassee. The purpose of this deployment was to provide direct coordination and planning support to the State under Emergency Support Function 10 (ESF-10), which is Oil and Hazardous Substance Response under the National Response Framework. Prior to Irma's landfall, we also provided a Region 4 liaison to the FEMA Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC) in Atlanta, Georgia, and deployed EPA regional, senior leaders to Miami-Dade, Palm Beach County, Broward County and Tallahassee to coordinate with local officials on Hurricane Irma preparations and immediate response needs.

As a proactive measure, Region 4 Superfund staff assessed vulnerabilities at all Superfund remedial sites, including National Priority List (NPL) sites, in the state of Florida prior to Irma's landfall. Before and after landfall, we worked closely with EPA Headquarters to issue a combination of 12 fuel waivers across multiple states whose fuel supply was impacted by the hurricanes and no action assurances to help stabilize prices at the pump and ensure that emergency vehicles had access to fuel. The fuel waivers and no action assurances were critical to assure the movement of people and goods, such as food and medical supplies.

On September 10, 2017, Hurricane Irma made landfall near Naples, Florida, and, on September 11th, while Irma was still moving across northern Florida, we positioned 12 Field Hazard Assessment Teams consisting of EPA OSCs, technical assistance team contractors and FDEP personnel for deployment when needed. In addition, the team included a number of OSCs that were mobilized from the EPA Region 5 office in Chicago to support our efforts. These teams were deployed to Orlando, Florida on September 12th, tasked by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, at Florida's request, under an ESF-10 Mission Assignment to provide oil and hazardous substance response support by first conducting targeted facility assessment support at chemical and oil storage facilities as prioritized by the State of Florida. The Mission

Assignment further directed EPA to provide support to the State, for orphan container assessment and recovery, vessel pollution response and mitigation, and debris management technical support.

Region 4 Water Protection Division personnel were also deployed to the Florida SEOC to assist the State and the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers with water and wastewater systems technical support at the SEOC and in the field. Combining the efforts of Water Protection Division staff (Water Team) at the SEOC and at the EPA Regional office in Atlanta, we coordinated with FDEP to monitor the status of more than 1,600 Community Drinking Water Systems and over 2,000 wastewater systems in the State. Florida employs an on-line, self-reporting system known as *Storm Tracker* to monitor the status of water utility systems. Working with the State, the Water Team prioritized water and wastewater systems having a status of "unknown" in *Storm Tracker* for phone contact based on population served or design capacity. Systems that could not be reached were referred to FDEP to request their District Office or Approved County Public Health Unit confirm their operational status. Beginning on September 18th, Water Division personnel in the EPA Regional Office began contacting wastewater facilities with an unknown status while FDEP contacted pubic drinking water systems. By September 21st, these Water Division personnel had completed 934 call-down assessments. Having completed its assignments from the FDEP, the Water Sector mission was completed on September 27th and the team members demobilized from Florida on September 28th. Concurrently, FDEP also made a direct request to EPA's Regional Office in Atlanta for assistance in contacting small non-community drinking water systems, such as schools and restaurants, and the Water Division completed 1,255 call-down assessments during the week of September 25th.

Our Hazard Assessment Teams began field operations in Florida on September 13th, and completed this first phase of their mission on September 16th having performed field assessments at more than 200 chemical and oil storage facilities identified as priorities by the State. On September 15th, the EPA Incident Commander of our Hazard Assessment Group established a command post in St. Petersburg, Florida, and prepared to direct area-wide reconnaissance for pollution incidents and orphan containers in the counties of central and southern Florida. By September 20th, our teams had cleared 134 assessment grids, covering five Florida counties, and identified no significant storm-related hazardous substance or oil pollution incidents.

On September 22nd, we joined the U.S. Coast Guard and the State of Florida in a Unified Command established in Miami, Florida. EPA operations under the Unified Command were directed to orphan container and vessel recovery in the Florida Keys. We also deployed technical specialists to the Keys under a separate FEMA mission to provide support to the state in assessment of Disaster Debris Management Sites.

Our operations in the Florida Keys continue as we speak. To date, we have collected more than 704 orphan containers, consisting primarily of 55-gallon drums and propane tanks, that are stored in a secure staging area for waste characterization and recycling or disposal. With a focus on private canals in the Keys, our EPA teams have recovered oil and hazardous materials from more than 65 sunken or grounded vessels and moved these craft to land-based staging areas where they are transferred to the custody of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission. Our current orphan container and vessel recovery Mission Assignment ends on November 30th, and talks are ongoing as to whether the State wishes to extend the mission beyond this date.

As I mentioned earlier, prior to Irma's landfall, we assessed vulnerabilities at all Superfund remedial sites in Florida. On September 12th, at the same time that our Hazard

Assessment Teams were deploying to Orlando, Region 4 deployed six Teams to conduct boots-on-the-ground assessments of all National Priority List sites within the State. As a further measure, we also deployed teams to assess NPL sites in Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina. These teams were directed to complete on-site assessment of the sites, document current operating conditions, verify that there were no releases from the sites and—where necessary—take any further actions to protect health and the environment. In all, we found that our remedial sites experienced little impact from Hurricane Irma. Damage to the site security fencing was noted at the Terry Creek Site in Georgia and the Fairfax Wood site in Florida, where some minor erosion was also observed. As a precaution, samples were collected from an on-site retention pond at Fairfax Wood. Analytical results from these samples indicate that no storm-related contamination issues were present at the site. A tear in the geomembrane cap at the Post and Lumber Site in Quincy, Florida was also identified. Repairs at all of these sites have been completed or are underway.

Post landfall, we also reached out directly to ascertain the status of all 310 oil storage facilities required to maintain Facility Response Plans (FRP facilities) within Florida, Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina and all 274 chemical facilities within Florida required to maintain Risk Management Plans (RMP facilities). We worked through our state partners to determine the status of RMP facilities within Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina. FRP facilities are oil storage facilities that store large volumes of oil, typically greater than one million gallons. RMP facilities are facilities that store greater than a threshold volume of hazardous chemicals.

Overall, there were very minimal reports of oil and hazardous substance spills that could be attributed to the Storm and only one of the 274 RMP facilities contacted, reported a hazardous substance release (ammonia release to air at Pilgrim's Pride in Live Oak), the source of which

was mitigated quickly. Also, none of the large volume oil storage facilities (FRPs) reported any significant issues or releases or discharges of oil.

The achievement of these results is in direct relation to the proactive approach Region 4 used to ensure protection of human health and the environment.

RECOVERY

Moving forward, we continue to meet mission assignments under the response phase and have initiated our recovery activities with FEMA and seven other federal partners under the National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF). Under NDRF, EPA supports federal partners primarily on community planning and capacity building, infrastructure systems and recovery, and natural and cultural resources which translate into smart growth practices, mitigation, community resilience, and disaster planning.

FEMA issued a Mission Assignment to EPA Region 4 to provide a Recovery Sustainability Advisor to the Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator (FDRC) located at the Orlando Joint Field Office (JFO). The Sustainability Advisor's role is to integrate sustainability and resilience into the work of the Interagency Recovery Coordination (IRC) Team, which will focus on all six of the Recovery Support Functions (RSF): 1) Natural and Cultural Resources; 2) Infrastructure; 3) Health and Social Services; 4) Economic development; 5) Housing; and, 6) Capacity Planning and Community Building. The IRC was activated to conduct a Mission Scoping Assessment (MSA) for FEMA and the state of Florida with the first draft due on November 16, 2017. Once the MSA is approved by the state, FEMA and the IRC will start development of the Recovery Support Strategy (RSS). It is anticipated that the RSS

implementation will take up to a year and require support by the Sustainability Advisor and Region 4.

The Recovery Sustainability Advisor has created a team comprised of representatives from each Region 4 Division that meet on a weekly basis to provide support to the IRC and JFO. As a result, below are some of the opportunities that have been identified:

- Arranged for Region 4's partner, the Southeast Pediatrics Environmental Health Specialty Unit, to provide children's environmental health training to the Miami-Dade Early Learning Coalition.
- Connected FEMA's mitigation program, Army Corp and the Region 4 Water Protection Division to discuss their work on culvert design to strengthen storm resilience.
- Working on the Nursing Home and Assisted Living Facility Emergency Power and Mitigation Taskforce to identify permitting issues for fuel storage and looking at alternative fuel opportunities.
- Working with the Capacity Planning Community Building RSF to develop the new Placed Based Initiative, a tiered approach to identify communities with the greatest need for recovery assistance.
- Working with the Economy RSF to develop environmental best practices documents for small to medium size businesses on pollution prevention and toxics mitigation related to storm events.

We are excited to have the opportunity to work with our federal, state, tribal and local partners on this innovative initiative.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to be here and share with you what I consider to be a great example of cooperative federalism to assure and restore public safety and recovery from disaster. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.